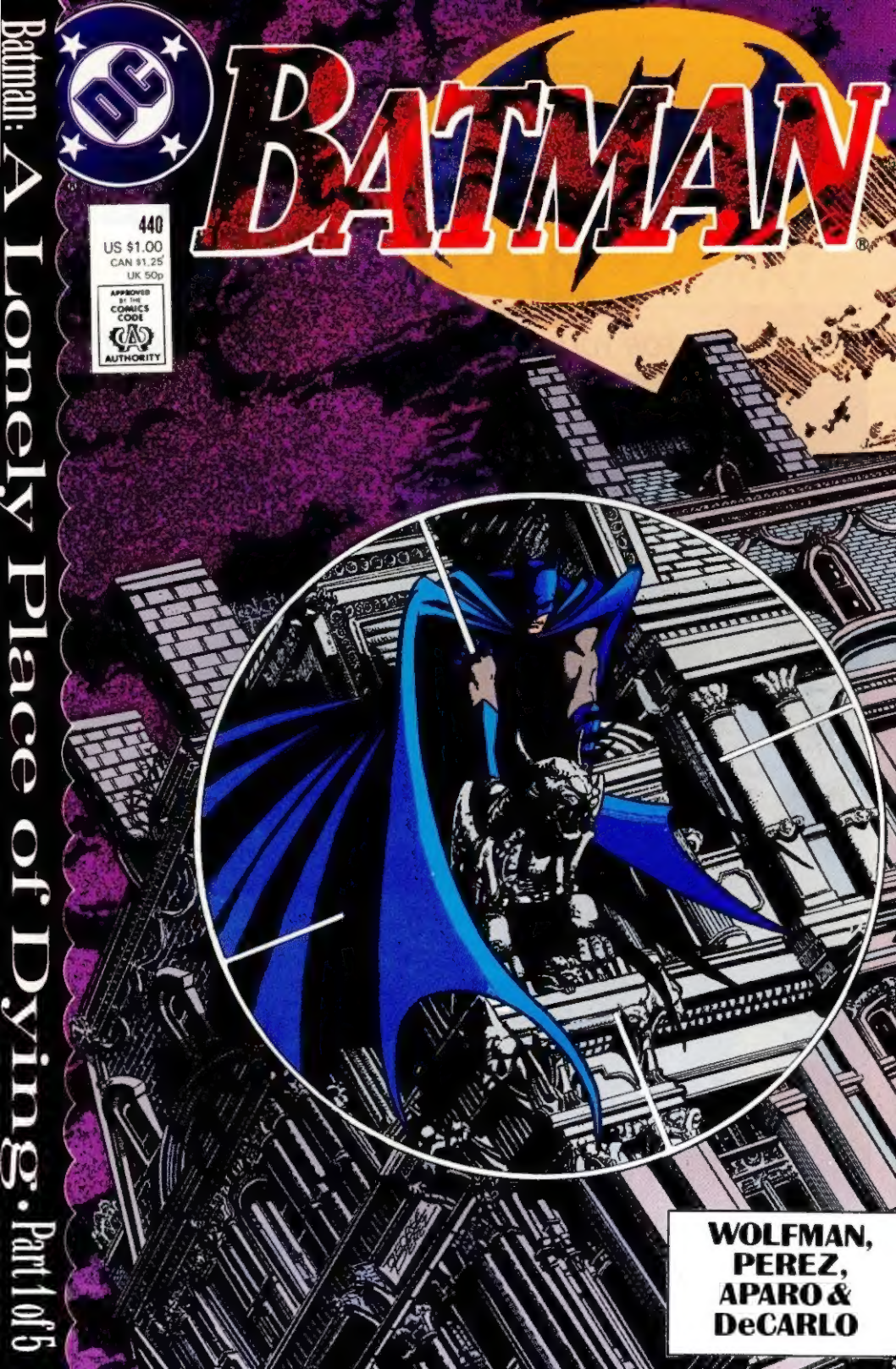
DC
BATMAN
440
US $1.00
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UK 50p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Batman: A Lonely Place of Dying. Part 1 of 6
WOLFMAN, PEREZ, APARO & DeCARLO

STRAP IN FOR FULL THROTTLE ACTION.

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TAITO
NOBODY EVER SAID IT WOULD BE EASY...
Deep in enemy territory, you've got to fly your P-40 on a dangerous top secret mission.
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one reason. You're the best there is. You know the score, so aim right and fly tight. The
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THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN™

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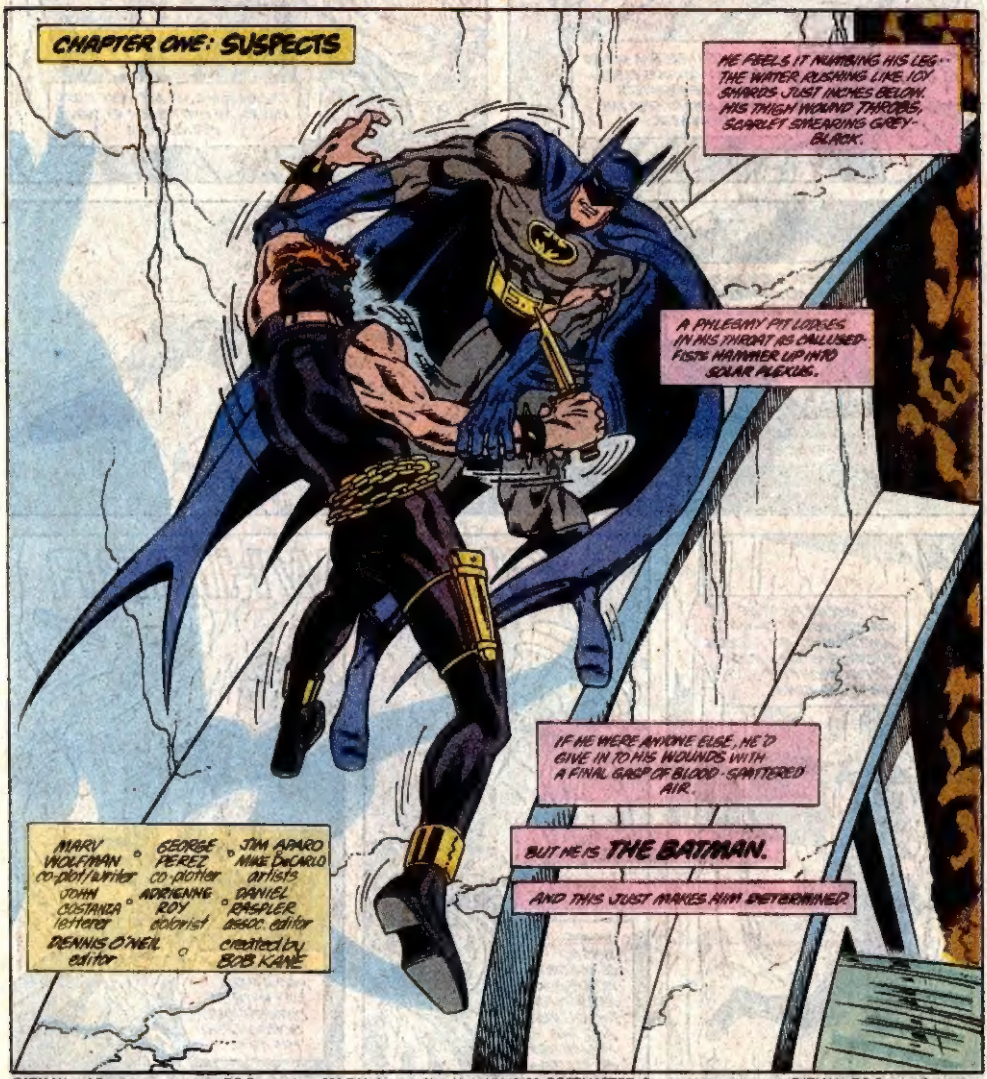
A LONELY PLACE of DYING


CHAPTER ONE: SUSPECTS
HE FEELS IT NUMBING HIS LEG... THE WATER RUSHING LIKE JOY SHARDS. JUST INCHES BELOW, HIS THIGH WOUND THROBS, SCARLET SMEARING GREY-BLACK.
A PHLEGMY PIT LODGES IN HIS THROAT AS CALLUSED FISTS HAMMER UP INTO SOLAR PLEXUS.
IF HE WERE ANYONE ELSE, HE'D GIVE IN TO HIS WOUNDS WITH A FINAL GASP OF BLOOD-SPATTERED AIR.
BUT HE IS THE BATMAN.
AND THIS JUST MAKES HIM DETERMINED!
MARV WOLFMAN co-plot/writer
GEORGE PEREZ co-plotter
JIM APARO MIKE DeCARLO artists
JOHN COSTANZA letterer
ADRIENNE ROY colorist
DANIEL RASPLER assoc. editor
DENNIS O'NEIL editor
created by BOB KANE

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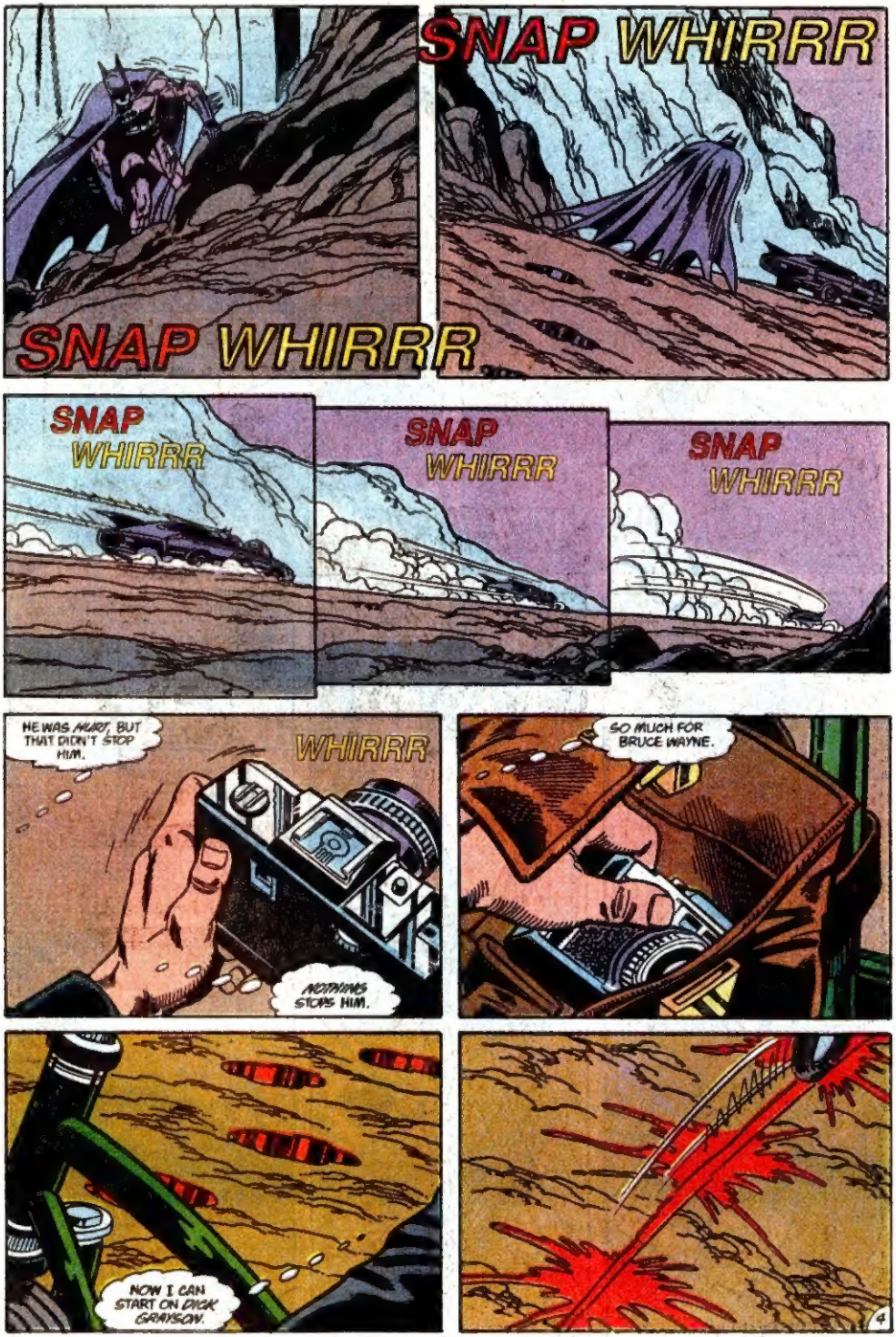
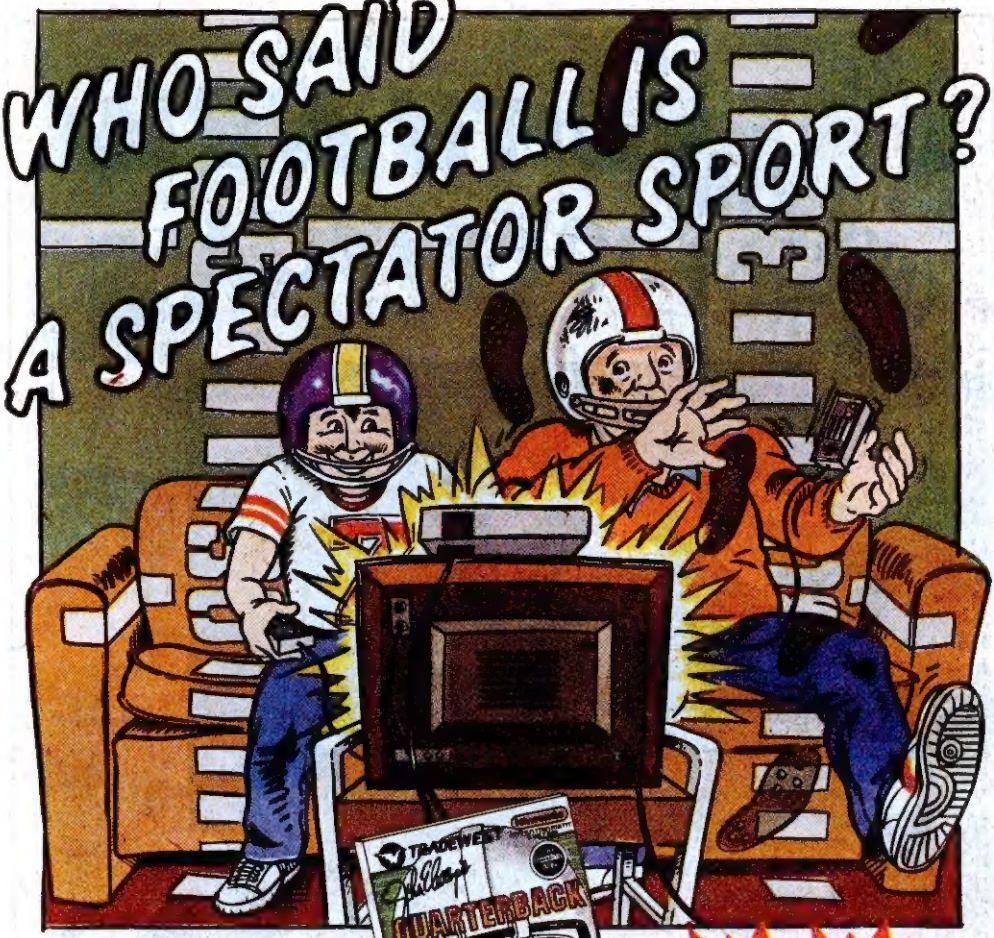
SNAP
HE WAS LED HERE BY A SERIES OF ALL-TOO-OBVIOUS CLUES. SOMEONE DESPERATELY WANTED HIM TO FIND THE RAVAGER.
WHIRRR
THE RAVAGER. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS HE HAD KILLED AS MANY POLICEMEN.
HE HAD FOLLOWED THEM TO THEIR HOMES AND FOR NO APPARENT REASON SHOT THEM WHILE THEY SLEPT.
TWO WEEKS PRIOR HE GUNNED DOWN "DANNY AND DANNY", THE FAMOUS BROTHER-SISTER ROCK ACT IN FRONT OF 50,000 FANS.
SNAP
THERE WAS NO CONNECTION. NO SEEMING REASON FOR THE KILLINGS. AND THE POLICE HAD NO CLUES— OR LEADS.
WHIRRR
THE BARLOWS HAD A FIELD DAY WITH COMMISSIONER GORDON AND HIS MEN.
2
2

THEN, THIS MORNING, THERE WAS AN ANONYMOUS PHONE CALL TO GORDON.
FROM THAT LEADS UNFOLDED LIKE A BLOSSOMING FLOWER. LEADS WHICH BROUGHT HIM HERE.
SNAP WHIRRR
HIS BREATH COMES IN SHORT SPUTTERING GASPS AS HIS MOUTH FILLS WITH WARM BLOOD...
THE BATMAN FALLS BACK TO THE WALL, TAKING STOCK OF HIS WOUNDS. HIS BREATHING EASES... HIS TAUT SKIN LOOSENS, THE NARROW WHITE SLIT OF HIS EYES WIDENS, IF ONLY A FRACTION.
HE WATCHES HIS FOE STRUGGLING IN THE WHITE FOAM.
FOR THE MOMENT, IT IS OVER.
THEY WILL MEET AGAIN.
SNAP WHIRR
3


SNAP WHIRRR
SNAP WHIRRR
SNAP WHIRRR
SNAP WHIRRR
SNAP WHIRRR
HE WAS HURT, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM.
WHIRRR
NOTHING STOPS HIM.
SO MUCH FOR BRUCE WAYNE.
NOW I CAN START ON DICK GRAYSON.
4



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COMING THIS FALL!

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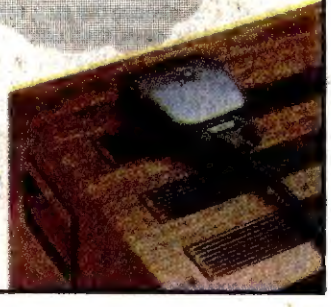

QuickShot®

by BONDWELL

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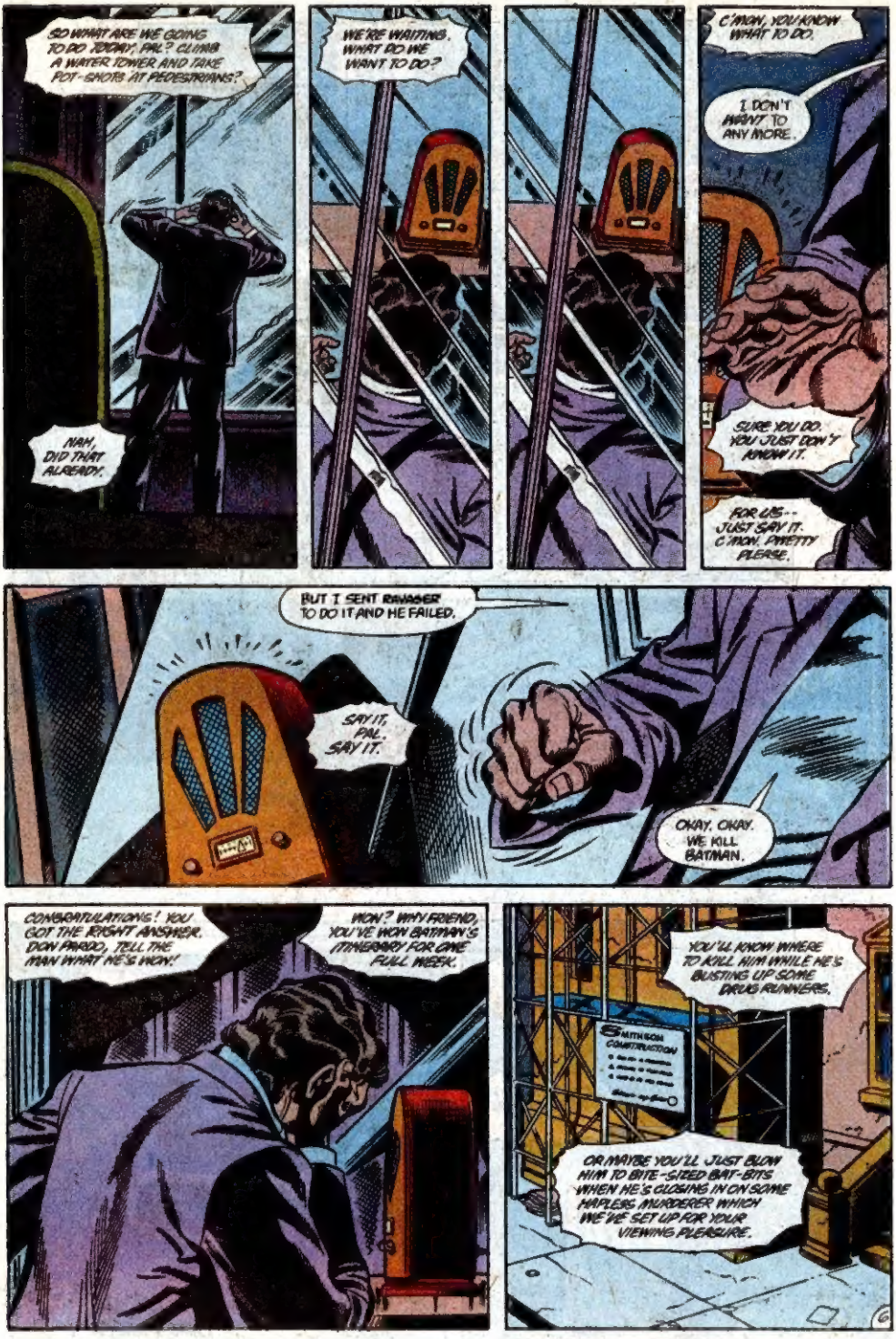
...NEWS HEADLINES ON WGCH, GOTHAM'S ONLY 24-HOUR ALL-NEWS STATION.
GOTHAM'S OLDEST ORPHANAGE RECEIVES MILLION-DOLLAR DONATION FROM WEALTHY PHILANTHROPIST, ALLOWING THE INSTITUTION TO REMAIN OPEN INDEFINITELY...
...AND GOTHAM'S OWN SPELLING CHAMP, NINE-YEAR OLD MOON KAPLAN, RETURNS FROM HER MEETING WITH GEORGE BUSH.
ASKED WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF THE PRESIDENT, THE ADOLESCENT ABECEDARIAN SAID "READ MY LIPS," AND SPELLED SOMETHING NOT SUITABLE FOR FAMILY LISTENING--
SQAWK SQEEECHHH... HELLO, HELLO? SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT I'M BACK... JUST FOR YOU!
...I'VE... BEEN... WAITING.
WHO ARE YOU?
WHO AM I? BETTER ASK WHO WE ARE. C'MON, PAL--I'M YOU, YOU'RE ME.
YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN GOING CRAZY FOR YEARS.
TA TA. GUESS WHAT?
CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE SUCCEEDED! YOU'RE OFFICIALLY CRACKED, SCHIZOID! DAFFY AS A DUCK!
LOOK IN THE MIRROR, PAL. YOU'RE NOT TALKING, BUT YOUR LIPS ARE MOVING.
IF THAT AIN'T PROOF THAT YOU'RE SEVERAL CHAPTERS SHY OF A BOOK, NOTHING IS.
5


SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TODAY, PAL? CLIMB A WATER TOWER AND TAKE POT-SHOTS AT PEDESTRIANS?
NAH, DID THAT ALREADY.
WE'RE WAITING. WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?
C'MON, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I DON'T WANT TO ANY MORE.
SURE YOU DO. YOU JUST DON'T KNOW IT.
FOR US-- JUST SAY IT. C'MON, PRETTY PLEASE.
BUT I SENT RAVAGER TO DO IT AND HE FAILED.
SAY IT, PAL. SAY IT.
OKAY, OKAY. WE KILL BATMAN.
CONGRATULATIONS! YOU GOT THE RIGHT ANSWER. DON FABIO, TELL THE MAN WHAT HE'S WON!
WON? WHY FRIEND, YOU'VE WON BATMAN'S ITINERARY FOR ONE FULL WEEK.
YOU'LL KNOW WHERE TO KILL HIM WHILE HE'S BUSTING UP SOME DRUG RUNNERS.
SMITHSON CONSTRUCTION
OR MAYBE YOU'LL JUST BLOW HIM TO BITE-SIZED BAT-BITS WHEN HE'S CLOSING IN ON SOME HAPLESS MURDERER WHICH WE'VE SET UP FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE.
6

"YOU'LL BE GIVEN A THOUSAND CHANCES TO SEE YOUR DREAM KILL COME TRUE.
"AND IT'S ALL YOURS. CONGRATULATIONS. IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED TO A BETTER PSYCHO IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
"AND NOW BACK TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED REPORT.
"...MEETING THE PRESIDENT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE."
2:24
47
HE LOOKS SO TIRED. HE HAS SINCE JASON PASSED AWAY.

BRUCE MAY'V BEEN THE SAME SINCE HE DIED. THE NEWSPAPERS DON'T KNOW ABOUT ROBIN'S DEATH...
...BUT EVEN THEY'VE HAD STORIES ABOUT BATMAN ACTING... WELL, ACTING DIFFERENTLY.
HE SEEMED MADDER WITH DICK.
GOTHAM
BATMAN ATTACKS MOB
BATMAN ON THE RAMPAGE
BATMAN COLLARS DOPE RING
FIVE ARRE IN ONE NIG
MOM, I GUESS IT'S LIKE HE JUST DOESN'T CARE.
BUT I WANT HIM TO CARE AGAIN. I WANT HIM TO BE THE BATMAN I REMEMBER.
BATMAN BATTERS BANDITS
"AND I DO REMEMBER HIM...
...AND I REMEMBER DICK...
...I REMEMBER IT ALL."

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HYDLIDE™

GET SET FOR

RADICAL ACTION

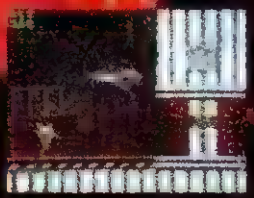
Stand by, gamers! Capcom introduces two new thrilling games to its Nintendo series. And as always, the graphics are hot and the action intense.

First, experience the ultimate character adventure game! As MegaMan, you must conquer and control the eight empires of the evil Dr. Wily. But beware of his sinister robots that rule each empire. Their special powers present a unique challenge at every level.

Then, prepare for undercover action as the Strider. Your orders are to enter Russia and infiltrate the Red Army, returning enemy secrets to your superiors. But be extremely cautious. You know what the Russians do to spies!

So get set for radical action in these exciting additions to the Nintendo Entertainment System. From Capcom, U.S.A.

MegaMan 2 Screen Shot

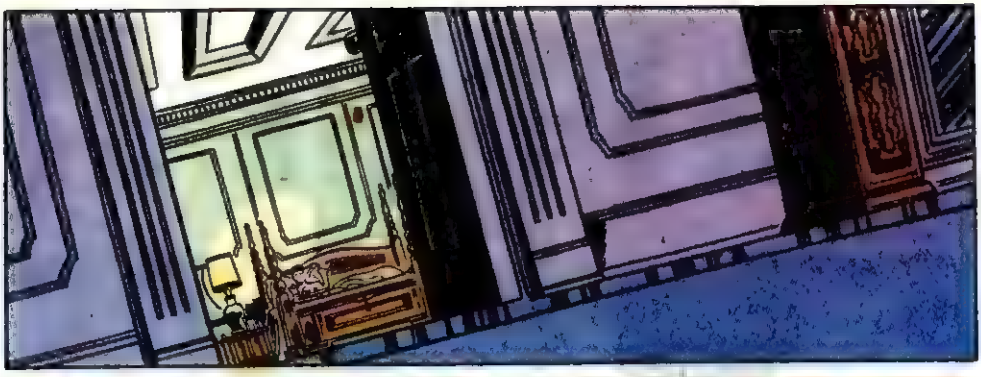


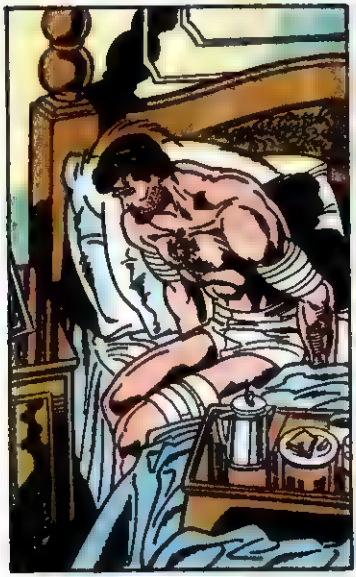
Strider Screen Shot

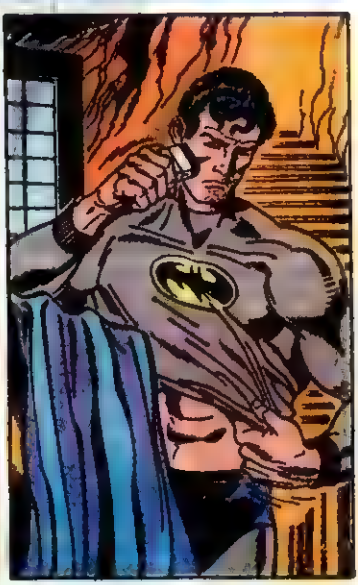
CAPCOM

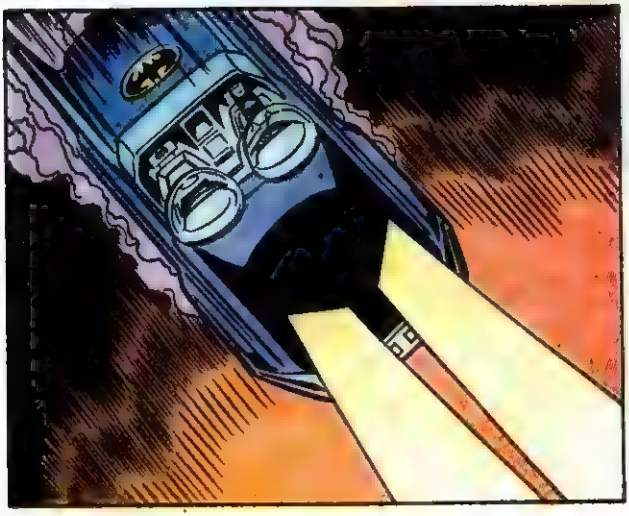
YOU LOOK STRONGER TODAY
THE FEVER'S PASSED. THANKS TO YOU.
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOU
AT TIMES..
.. SO DO I
SIR--
--PERHAPS THIS ISN'T MY PLACE, BUT...
...BUT I CARE FOR YOUR WELL-BEING.
WHEN I FIRST ENTERED YOUR EMPLOY, I WAS IMPRESSED BY YOUR EXTRAORDINARY PLANNING AND DEDUCTIVE SKILLS.
YOU SPENT AS MUCH TIME ORCHESTRATING YOUR ACTIONS AS EXECUTING THEM.
ASIDE FROM MUSCLE STRAIN AND AN OCCASIONAL PULLED LIGAMENT, YOUR NEED FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION WAS MINIMAL.
CONVERSELY, SINCE MASTER JASON'S DEATH, YOUR ATTENTION TO DETAIL HAS BEEN... UNAGGRESSIVE TO SAY THE LEAST.
AND IT IS HARDLY COINCIDENTAL THAT YOU HAVE REQUIRED ALMOST CONSTANT DOCTORING.

IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, YOU HAVE BEEN SHOT TWICE STABBED TWICE. YOU HAVE BEEN BLOODIED AND BLUDGEONED BY FOES YOU ONCE WOULD HAVE DANCED AROUND WITHOUT THINKING.
I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST INSTRUCTED MASTER DICK IN COMBAT, YOU SAID, "WE'RE NOT BRUTALIZERS. WE'VE GOT TO THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS."
SINCE MASTER JASON'S DEATH, YOU'VE CHANGED.
IT SEEMS, SIR, THAT YOU NOW DO ALL YOUR THINKING WITH THOSE SADLY BRUISED AND BATTERED KNUCKLES.
YESTERDAY YOU COLLAPSED FROM YOUR WOUNDS. I CANNOT BE CERTAIN THAT NEXT TIME YOU WILL SURVIVE THEM.
SIR, AS LOATH AS YOU MIGHT BE TO HEAR THIS, I DO NOT INTEND TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE PLAYING NURSE.
SIR--?
10



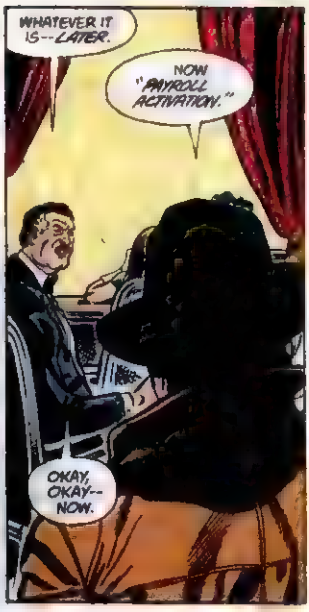






FIFTY THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN HE CAME TO AMERICA FROM SICILY, HE WAS MERELY THREE-YEAR-OLD GUISEPPE SCARLATTO.
WHEN HE WAS NINE, HE "AMERICANIZED" HIS NAME TO GERRY SKYE.

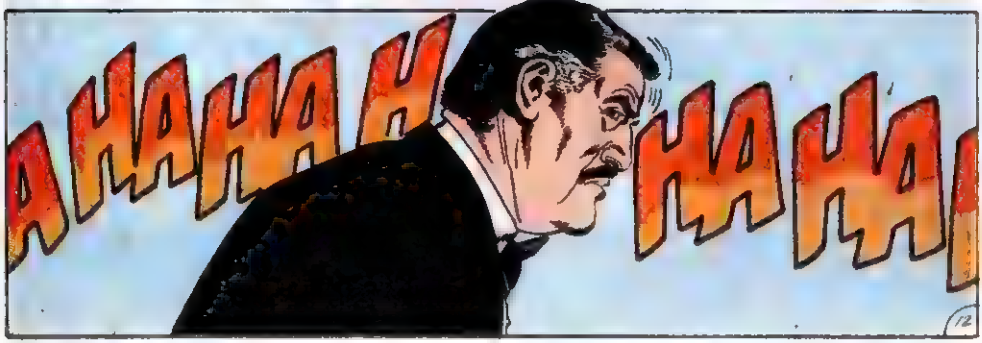
OVER THE FOLLOWING FORTY YEARS GERRY ACCUMULATED A FORTUNE BY JOINING THE FAMILY BUSINESS.
THAT'S THE FAMILY. NOT HIS FAMILY
PSSST. SKYE


WHATEVER IT IS--LATER.
NOW "PAYROLL ACTIVATION."
OKAY, OKAY-- NOW.

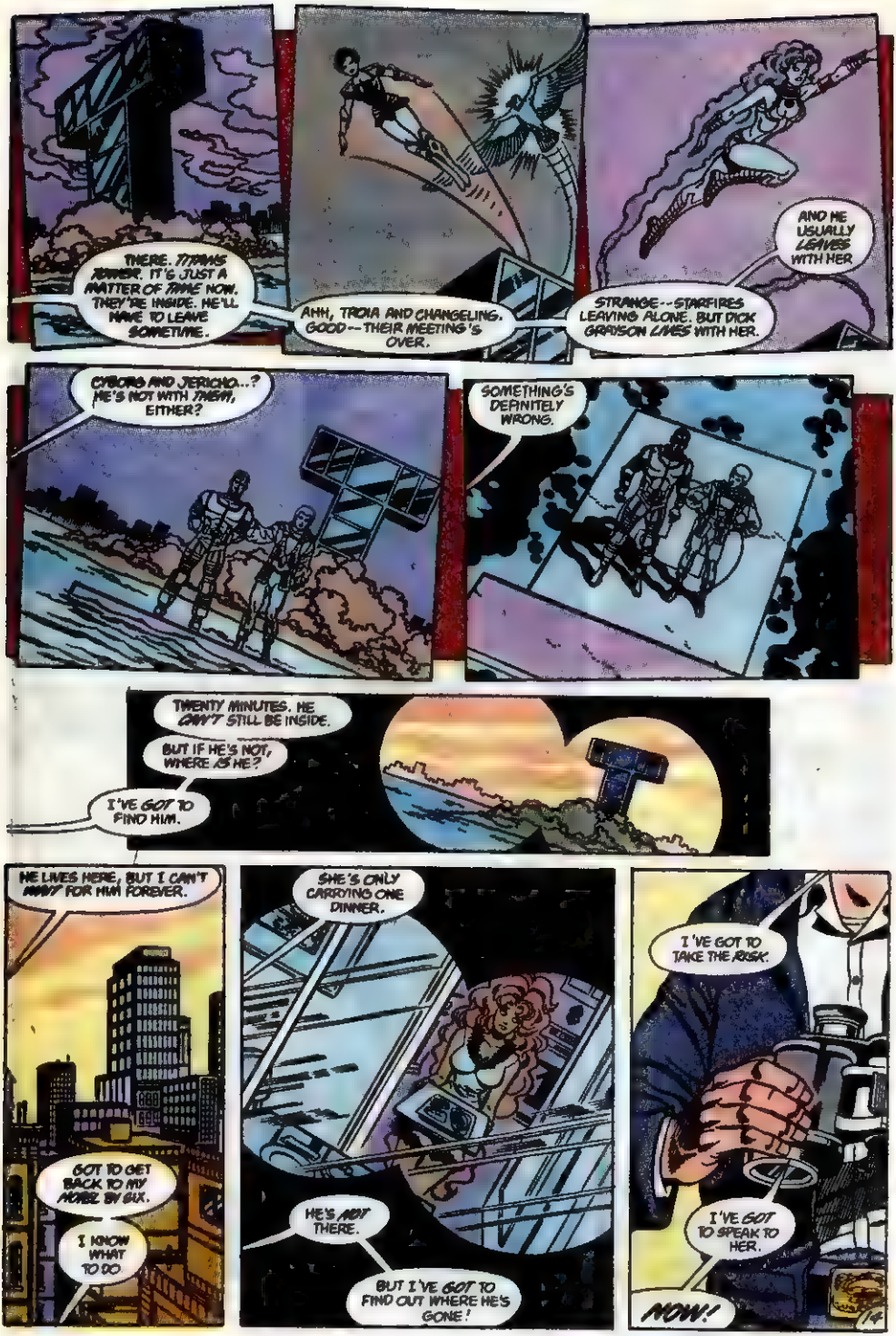
GERRY, WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHING. DON'T WORRY. ENJOY.

THIS HAD BETTER BE GOOD
YOU HAVE A COUPLE OF BOYS THAT HAVE BEEN CAUSING YOU TROUBLE
YEAH. PICO AND ROBERTSON. HOW'D YOU KNOW?
I JUST DO. WE CAN TAKE THEM OUT AND BATMAN AT THE SAME TIME, TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.

TOMORROW. THE ZWEI BROTHERS WAREHOUSE TWO A.M.
NOW GO BACK TO YOUR NICE WIFE.
THE FAT LADY'S ABOUT TO SING.


AHAHAH
HAHA

I DID IT-- I SET UP THE HEIST BATMAN'S GOING TO GET IT.
AREN'T YOU PLEASED?
WHERE ARE YOU? I SAID, "AREN'T YOU PLEASED WITH WHAT I DID?"
KLIK
YOU THERE NOW?
...SALE FOR TWELVE HOURS ONLY. FORTY PERCENT OFF ALL MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CLOTHING...
NOW, I DON'T MIND FORTY PERCENT OFF WOMEN'S CLOTHES--
--BUT MEN, KEEP YOUR PANTS ON!
SQUAWKK SCREEE LET'S NOT CONGRATULATE OURSELVES YET, PAL. WE'VE STILL GOT WORK TO DO AND BATS TO KILL...
I KNOW... I KNOW, EVEN IF I DON'T WANT--
...SO GET GOING...
...DOWN TO ART STAMPLER CLOTHIERS, 246 EIGHTH STREET, TAKE THE ELEVATOR TO THE SECOND FLOOR
WHAT? WHERE ARE YOU? DON'T GO. DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE. BY MYSELF. JUST ME. ONE.
OKAY, ALL RIGHT-- CALM DOWN. THERE'S NO ONE HERE... NO ONE'S BEEN HERE.
I'M TALKING TO MYSELF BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THINGS.
BATMAN STILL HAS TO DIE. TOMORROW... THE TWENTY SECOND.. HE DIES..
TOMORROW!
TOMORROW.
13


THERE. TITANS TOWER. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME NOW. THEY'RE INSIDE. HE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE SOMETIME.
AHH, TROIA AND CHANGELING. GOOD--THEIR MEETING'S OVER.
STRANGE--STARFIRES LEAVING ALONE. BUT DICK GRAYSON LIVES WITH HER.
AND HE USUALLY LEAVES WITH HER.
CYBORG AND JERICHO...? HE'S NOT WITH THEM, EITHER?
SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY WRONG.
TWENTY MINUTES. HE CAN'T STILL BE INSIDE.
BUT IF HE'S NOT, WHERE IS HE?
I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM.
HE LIVES HERE, BUT I CAN'T WAIT FOR HIM FOREVER.
GOT TO GET BACK TO MY MOBILE BY SIX.
I KNOW WHAT TO DO.
SHE'S ONLY CARRYING ONE DINNER.
HE'S NOT THERE.
BUT I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHERE HE'S GONE!
I'VE GOT TO TAKE THE RISK.
I'VE GOT TO SPEAK TO HER.
NOW!

THE WORD HIT THE STREET LAST NIGHT. SOMETHING GOING DOWN AT ZWEI BROTHERS, SO HE'S BEEN SITTING HERE SINCE ELEVEN, WAITING, THINKING, TIME SLOWLY PASSING BELOW HIM.
EACH MINUTE VIBRATES, SHOCKING HIM OUT OF HIS REVERIE, REMIND-ING HIM OF HIS SOLITUDE
ZWEI BROTHERS IMPORTERS
TICK...TICK...TICK...TICK...
GEARS JERK INTO PLACE, ARUGE, THEN CRANK ON IN AN ENDLESS CIRCLE.
HE SITS AND WAITS.
TICK...TICK...TICK...T-
YOU SURE THIS IS THE PLACE, MAN?
YEAH, ZWEI BROTHERS, THIS'S GOTTA BE IT.
DON'T LIKE IT HERE, MAN. DON'T LIKE COMIN' HERE DURIN' THE DAY, LET 'LONE NOW!
WE'RE NOT BEIN' PAID TO LIKE IT. C'MON.
EXCELLENT. THEY'RE ALL IN PLACE.
BOOKS? MAN, I DON'T GET IT. WE'RE STEALIN' BOOKS?
THE BOSS SAID WE WERE BEIN' PAID TO BY THE PUBLISHERS. THEY GET THE INSURANCE AN' THEN SELL 'EM AT A DISCOUNT ON STREET CORNERS...
THEY GET THEIR MONEY TWICE-- AND THE WRITERS GET ZIP!
BUT BOOKS? MAN, LIKE WHO READS ANYMORE?
YOU SHOULD.
WHO SAID--
15

BATMAN!?!
THE BOSS SAID HE'D SHOW. JUST LIKE HE DID FOR THE RAVAGER!
BUT WE'RE READY!
BAM BA
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM

BIONIC POWER

Get set for rapid-fire action as you are transformed into the Bionic Commando. This best seller from Capcom is a dynamic adaptation of the original arcade classic.

Expect an onslaught of challenges and extraordinary graphics when you battle enemy forces in their futuristic lands. Your powerful, extending bionic arm and incredible arsenal of weapons give you all you'll need to become an unstoppable one-man army.

To the most daring soldiers, this might seem an impossible task, but they've never experienced the power of Bionic Commando!

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THE OFFICIAL FAN CLUB

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BAM
BAM
BAM
BA
WHAT TH--
YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, BATMAN! DEAD MEAT!
ALFRED'S VOICE KEEPS RUNNING THROUGH HIS MIND: "WE'RE NOT BRUTALIZERS. WE'VE GOT TO THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS."
BAM BAM BA
"THINK... WITH... OUR... HEADS..."
"THINK!!"
SOMETHING IS WRONG... SOMETHING--
SPLANG
THE PUNK MENTIONED THE RAVAGER. THERE'S A CONNECTION WITH THE RAVAGER?
"THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS."
17

ISOLATED, SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED FRAGMENTS FALL INTO PLACE.
BAM BAM
BAM BAM BAM
TWO WEEKS AGO--TWO POLICEMEN KILLED TWO WEEKS BEFORE THAT, BROTHER AND SISTER SHOT. TWO MORE VICTIMS.
TODAY--THE TWENTY-SECOND. TWO AM. THIS ADDRESS: 22 SECOND STREET
BAM BAM BAM BAM
IT'S ALL BEEN THERE ALL ALONG.
ZWEI BROTHERS WAREHOUSE... ZWEI IS GERMAN FOR TWO.
"THINK WITH YOUR HEAD!"
BAM BAM
HE CURSES HIMSELF--WHAT WERE YOU DOING?
8

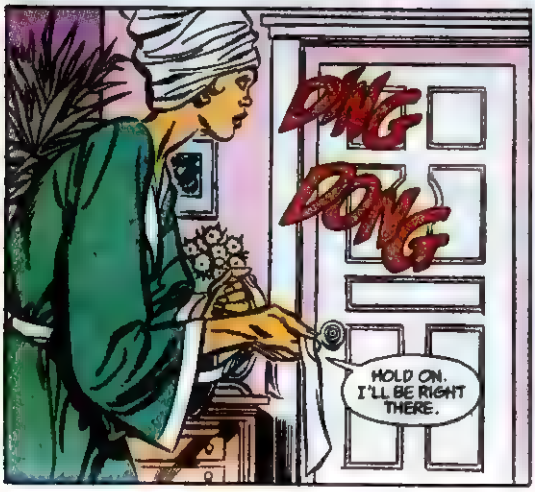
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WITH?
AND BATMAN KNOWS THE SAD, LUDICROUS ANSWER. HE WASN'T THINKING.
HE WAS ACTING AND REACTING.
FOR GORDON KEEP UNDER WRAPS MM
OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE REALIZED LONG AGO--
--THAT TWO-FACE WAS BACK!
DRY WALL
HE SURVIVED, BUT THAT'S OKAY. EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING.
THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW
IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS SAY.

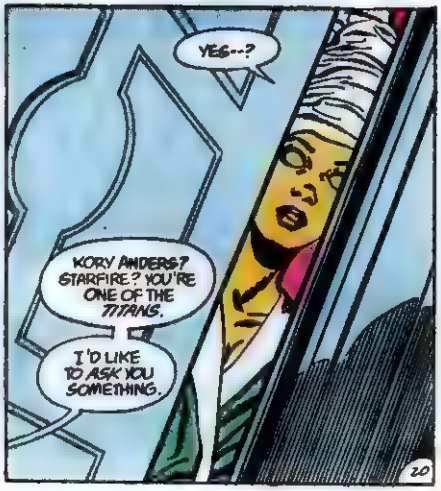
YOU DO KNOW I'VE GOT A DOOR.
TWO-FACE.
YOU MEAN THE MAN YOU BROKE OUT OF JAIL--

--AND THEN LET ESCAPE FROM A CARIBBEAN ISLAND?
THAT TWO FACE? WHAT ABOUT HIM?
ANY WORD?

WE'VE ISSUED AN APB FOR THE TRI-STATE AREA AND NOTIFIED THE FBI.
I'VE CANCELED LEAVES, PUT EXTRA MEN ON DUTY AND DOUBLED SHIFTS.

NOT THAT I EXPECT IT WILL DO ANY--
JUST ONCE I WISH HE'D SAY GOOD-BYE.
I HATE TALKING TO MYSELF.


DONG
DONG
HOLD ON. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.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I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.

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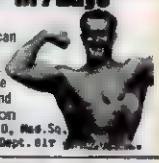

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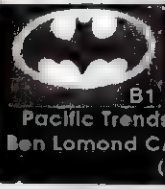

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I'M SORRY, BUT I REALLY CAN'T-
I'M LOOKING FOR DI--NIGHTWING. I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM.
IT'S URGENT.
NIGHTWING? WHY DO YOU--
IS HE HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
I KNOW HE WASN'T AT YOUR MEETING TODAY
I'M SORRY, I CAN'T GIVE YOU THAT INFORMATION.
NIGHTWING LEFT THE TITANS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.
BUT, IF YOU NEED OUR HELP--
NO--I NEED HIM. NOBODY ELSE.
WAIT! HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE?
WHO ARE YOU?
GRAYSON KEPT HIS OLD APARTMENT.
IF HE LEFT THE TITANS, HE MIGHT BE HERE.
OKAY, WHAT NOW?
21

HE'S A DETECTIVE... HE MUST KEEP NOTES EVEN SOMETHING SCRIBBLED ON A SHOPPING LIST.
GRAYSON, WHERE ARE YOU?
HOLD ON JUST ONE MOMENT.
END OF AMERICANA IN SIGHT?
LOCAL CIRCUS TO CLOSE AFTER SIXTY YEARS
Haly Circus, which has entertained children of all ages for more than sixty years, will close this October after their final summer season. Faith Haly, granddaughter of circus founder Garrison Haly, said, "We simply can't compete with the larger corporate circuses. The days of the small family circus, sadly, are over."
NO! THE HALY CIRCUS IS CLOSING?
IT CAN'T BE!
IT CAN'T!
"BUT AT LEAST I NOW KNOW WHERE HE IS."
NEXT ISSUE OF BATMAN: TWO-FACE STRIKES!

BAT-SIGNALS

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L-3855

Dear Denny,

The "BATMAN: YEAR THREE" storyline which has just begun with BATMAN #436, is most welcome for several reasons. First, this a period of time in the Batman's life that is very important, as it was when Robin (Dick Grayson) first joined the Dark Knight. And this follows on chronologically from the "Year One" and "Year Two" stories that were told a couple of years ago. Also, and most important, it looks like the aftermath of Jason's death is finally going to be dealt with. Both Bruce and Dick must be profoundly affected by what's happened, even if Bruce is doing his best not to acknowledge what's happened. And the relationship between these two men is balanced on a knife edge, something else that needs sorting out. I feel that Batman cannot accept that his former ward has grown up, and, similarly, cannot accept that his choice for the second Robin (Jason Todd) failed, ultimately. The first problem really only affects the two people involved. His lack of reaction to Jason's death could destroy him. We all need to grieve, and a failure to do so is catastrophic, emotionally and psychologically, for the grieving person. Maybe Dick can heal the rift and, at the same time, help Bruce through this difficult time. But first Bruce must acknowledge these differences. It isn't easy for the Batman to show emotion, as it's a human weakness. If he bottles it all up, however, it will eventually explode, and he himself will suffer most of all.

The first part of the saga is a nice set-up. Zucco's parole hearing is the perfect background, while we see Batman still driven, harder than ever. Dick's ruminations, and his realization that his former partner is in trouble, show that he has the knowledge and the ability to help. And his current problems are neatly juxtaposed to his origins as Robin. It's a powerful story. The art also looks very good. I wouldn't have thought of Broderick and Beatty as a natural team, and there are times when their contrasting styles are played up, but for the most part they've combined extremely well, the result being excellent storytelling. Naturally, George's cover was the perfect way to start the story off.

So, I know how Year Three itself progresses and what happens to young Dick Grayson. But I await with great anticipation the results of the reunion between the two heroes. It won't be an easy passage.

Take care,
Malcolm Bourne
6 Craigwell Road
Prestwich, Manchester
M25 8EF ENGLAND

As you can imagine, there was a lot of mail for our opening chapter of "Batman: Year Three"...

* * * * *

Dear Denny,

I really enjoyed reading BATMAN #436. I enjoyed the story because Dick Grayson is the most logical person to enter into Batman's life right now. In Batman's current state of mind, he needs someone like Dick Grayson to alleviate his anger and his melancholy. Batman losing Jason Todd can be likened to when Dick Grayson left. It was like losing your own son twice. Batman becomes an embittered loner without a companion. He needs someone to keep him under control.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts.

Michael Leon
47 Jean Avenue
Hempstead, NY 11550

Thank you for sharing them, Michael.

* * * * *

Dear Denny,

I have been very disappointed with recent issues of BATMAN; however, credit where credit is due: issue #436 was excellent.

For too long Dick Grayson was merely an addition to the Batman legend, and even as Nightwing we never really learned much about his early life. I hope "Year Three" will help us understand Dick Grayson as a person, and why he eventually had to split with Bruce Wayne.

It was interesting that even though we usually associate Dick with Bruce Wayne, it is his and Anthony Zucco's lives which are entwined and compared. In fact, the comparison between Dick's and Anthony's reaction to similar circumstances shows the inherent goodness within Dick Grayson.

In fact, I found Dick's story even more tragic than Bruce Wayne's, as not only were his parents killed, but he was then taken away from his loving circus 'family' at the time he needed them most. The fourth panel on page 18 where Harry the clown comforts young Dick is one of the most moving images I have ever seen in a comic.

There was a lump in my throat, though, as Dick walked through the Batcave and Jason's bedroom and realized that Batman refused to acknowledge Jason's existence.

I could go on and on about how much I enjoyed this comic, but suffice it to say that I honestly cannot wait for issue #437.

Best wishes,
Martin Simcox
84 Barnett Lane
Wordsley, Stourbridge
West Midlands
DY8 5PX ENGLAND

* * * * *

Dear Denny and Dan,

How does a man live with himself when he blames himself not only for being alive, but being in some ways responsible for something he cannot bear? What kind of behavior does his anger and frustration manifest itself in, constructive or destructive? Finally, what will all this lead to? For our friend Bruce Wayne, does a violent end give birth to a promising new beginning like DARK KNIGHT #4? Will he face a humiliating defeat at the hands of his former student, or does his rage turn into an uncontrollable spree that must be stopped by someone with the power and ability to do so?

An oak tree stands proud, tall, and unbending before the gales of a storm, while a nearby reed sways and flexes. After the storm, the reed is alive due to its flexibility, while the oak tree lies uprooted, toppled for its arrogance and short-sightedness. Which road lies ahead for the Gotham Guardian? His storm is only beginning.

This is not to say he has not faced storms before. The debacle and madness bleeding in front of an eight-year-old boy in Crime Alley, Dick's brush with death in BATMAN #408-409, and the haunting vision of "A Death in the Family" that Alan Davis foretold in the cover to DETECTIVE #574 all are violent storms that have left their mark on the unbending Bruce Wayne. Instead of growing from these experiences and learning to deal with them, he has stood proud with honor, seemingly unshakeable and inflexible—but every tree has a breaking point. He is the world's greatest detective, a brilliant scientist, yet he forgets that though the rain pours into his face, the sun comes out eventually and dries the rain. In his anger, Batman hides from this sun and becomes a creature of the night. He allows the pain to continue to grow, to fester like an untreated wound. Why would a sane man do this?

It's safe. Certainly his lifestyle is dangerous physically, but on a psychological level, it's safe. He doesn't have to deal with the death of his parents, or especially Jason's, now. He vents his anger in his crimefighting activities, but he's failing to realize that no matter how many criminals he brings in, and no matter how many people he saves,

Thomas and Martha Wayne and Jason Todd are *not* coming back. Bruce Wayne has never accepted their death, not in all his years of specialized training, and not in all his years as the Batman. What is this leading to?

Bruce Wayne, the unbending tree, is setting himself up for a huge fall, whether he's conscious of it or not. I hope that Alfred, Dick, and the Commissioner are there to catch him before he falls too far. Denny and Dan, I have faith in the creative teams you've assembled. The Batman is in capable hands, and I look forward to the tales to be told in the coming months.

Denny, congratulations to you for being named writer on LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT. I am very excited about the prospect of a Deluxe Format Batman book, and I understand Ed Hannigan's providing the art for the first five-part story. This is wonderful news. Will it be carrying a "Suggested for Mature Readers" label? Time will tell.

Sincerely,
Jubal L. Myer
10139 Trevett Road
Springville, NY 14141

The rumors are true! There will be a third Batman title and it begins in October! LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT will be different from the other Batman titles due to its structure—every five issues will be a complete story by a different creative team. Denny will be writing a lot of stories for this new title, but not all of them! The first story-cycle is titled "The Shaman of Gotham" and is indeed written by Denny and illustrated by Ed Hannigan and John Beatty. LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT won't carry a "Suggested for Mature Readers" advisory, but you can expect the stories to be slightly more sophisticated than the stories in the regular books.

Thanks for a very thoughtful letter, Jubal.

* * * * *

Dear Batmen,

I'm a counselor at Sky Ranch for Boys in South Dakota, a home for troubled boys. Batman is very popular among the dormitories, even though the life and death of Jason Todd struck home hard with a lot of the kids.

Many could identify with Jason's juvenile problems. There's a popular consensus that they would like to see Dick Grayson return as Robin someday. For now the boys prefer Batman alone as they are, always haunted by memories and past mistakes, yet continually striving to find peace in their lives and someone to share their future with.

Batman is a tragic figure, as are many people, and because of this he is their cult hero.

In SUPERMAN, WONDER WOMAN and the other super-hero comics, the villains are always trying to "take over the world," where in BATMAN, the villains are very real compared to the criminals that infest our society today. Keep it that way. We need a hero that we can identify with—Batman.

Thanks for listening.

Joe Brindley
Sky Ranch for Boys
Sky Ranch, SD 57724

My Dearest Friends At DC,

Why does the Joker get all the fame and glory? If I don't appear in one of Batman's comics soon, things may get nasty.

(signed)
The Riddler

Oh, this is just great. My first Batman letter column and I'm already receiving threats from costumed villains. Well, Edward (can I call you Ed?), information about the Riddler can be found at the end of this very letter column! But don't skip ahead!

* * * * *

Dear DC,

I do not like where the BATMAN comic is headed. Of late, Batman has become "soft" on criminals. And now, on the letters page of #436, you say Batman does not want to kill the Joker anymore. How can Batman be a "Dark Avenger of the Night" if he doesn't even want to kill his worst enemy, who has murdered countless innocents?! Batman imprisons the Joker, knowing full well the Arkham Asylum can't hold him. The Joker escapes (again), goes on a crime spree, and the cycle begins again. I know you can't kill the Joker (he is the main villain, and I like him!), but at least have Batman THINKING about killing him, like in the DARK KNIGHT novel, instead of all that wimpy "crossing the line" and "sinking to their level" crud! The Joker knows what he is doing, and insanity should not stop the Joker from getting the justice he deserves. The Joker should escape Batman's wrath through cunning, not Batman's unlogical leniency. This would make both characters more interesting. Batman should also kill the really BAD criminals (murderers, rapists, pedophiliacs, etc.). If Batman is so restrained, then he is nothing more than an aid to the police, and all the menace is taken out of him.

Please change your comic, and have the Dark Knight earn his name.

Sincerely,
Chris Small
Houston, TX

I have to tell you up front, Chris, that your perception of who and what the Batman represents is a little frightening to me. But it provides an interesting focal point for discussion. Is the Batman a killer? Or, more to the point, do you perceive him as being one? Letters, please!

* * * * *

Batdudes,

I really like the way "Batman: Year Three" is going. I can't know this for sure, of course, but from where I sit, it looks like by the end of this 4-part tale we'll be seeing young Timmy in the yellow cape at the big guy's side. I hope I'm right. Batman has been through a lot and taking on a new partner might be good for him. Tim must be about 15 now, which is a good age. He'll be more mature than Jason, less reckless and easier to control. Of course, I could be completely wrong about this, which could be pretty embarrassing.

'Til Jim Gordon shaves his moustache—

Christopher Scott
The Bronx, USA

This letter has been censored due to Christopher's almost spilling the beans about the conclusion of our next storyline. You know, some people are just too clever for their own good...

* * * * *

Dear Bat-Guys,

Who cares about the great storylines? Give me Denny's column any day!

'Til next time, MAKE MINE "From The Den!"

Bat-fanningly
David Child
York, Yorkshire
ENGLAND

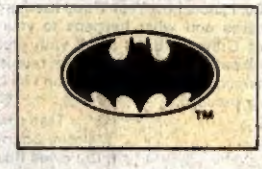
* * * * *

NEXT ISSUE: Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo return, Marv Wolfman sticks around for a few more issues and George Perez provides another nifty cover. Dick Grayson is also still here, beginning a 5-part crossover with NEW TITANS entitled "A Lonely Place of Dying." The action starts here and some of the clues planted throughout "Year Three" begin to make sense. Oh, yeah—this story leads to a MAJOR turning point in the Batman mythos (as they say down the hall). Watch for BATMAN #440 in the shops around September 1st!

In the meantime, don't forget about the conclusion of "Mudpack," the Clayface Saga currently appearing in the twice-monthly DETECTIVE COMICS; and keep your eyes peeled (ouch!) for a SECRET ORIGINS SPECIAL featuring the origins of three great Batman villains: Two-Face, the Penguin, and the Riddler. It's lurking behind a stunning Brian Bolland cover!

And be on the lookout for the DETECTIVE COMICS ANNUAL #2, on sale NOW! It's a story of the early years of our hero, as he learned the detective's art. PLUS the Rogues Gallery Who's Who!

—KC Carlson



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